

Book review for *The Beacon*

Title: *Drink the Wild Air: An Accidental Awakening*

by Fiona Evans

Wild Air Publishing 2013

paperback, 294 pages



A quick glance at the website for this book (drinkthewildair.com.au) was enough to convince me that I wanted to read Fiona's story. She sounded young, vibrant, real and I loved the title. When the book arrived, I admired the cover with her beautiful imperfect breasts proudly displayed.

I then promptly put the book face down on the kitchen bench. I stopped and thought, am I ready? I hadn't read a cancer book since my own journey two years ago. I wasn't sure that I wanted to be reminded of my experience or be sad for yet another woman. I wondered if I had appropriately thought through my commitment to review this book. Was it too soon?

Later that evening I picked up the book and started to read. 'Now or never,' I thought, and I am so glad I did. Fiona's story is not about cancer. It is a raw story of a woman discovering herself and working out what is meaningful in her life. Her breast cancer is a part of the story but most definitely not the focus. The honesty and directness with which she writes makes her book a very refreshing quick read (I finished it in three nights).

At no point did I feel that she wrote the book for sympathy. This isn't a 'poor me' story. It also isn't a book of extraordinary triumph or achievement. While some women do amazing things like run marathons after cancer, others like myself and to some extent Fiona, use our energy to just keep fit, be healthy, wiser and kinder to ourselves and our battered bodies.

Her book highlights some of the many issues women struggle with including depression and her story shows professional assistance can help. For health professionals she nicely explains how a compassionate attitude makes a patient feel like a person and that words spoken without thought can have a huge negative impact. At the end of the book, Fiona felt like a friend. I do recommend this book and I am donating it to my local library in the hope that a range of women (not just those with a cancer journey) and perhaps a few blokes will read and enjoy her book.

by Tonia Woodberry, BCNA Review & Survey Group member